

## Florida Avenue Market Study

WASHINGTON DC

March 2009

SMALL AREA PLAN

VOLUME I



Government of the District of Columbia  
Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor  
Harriet Tregoning, Director - Office of Planning

*Lead Agency:*

District of Columbia,  
Office of Planning

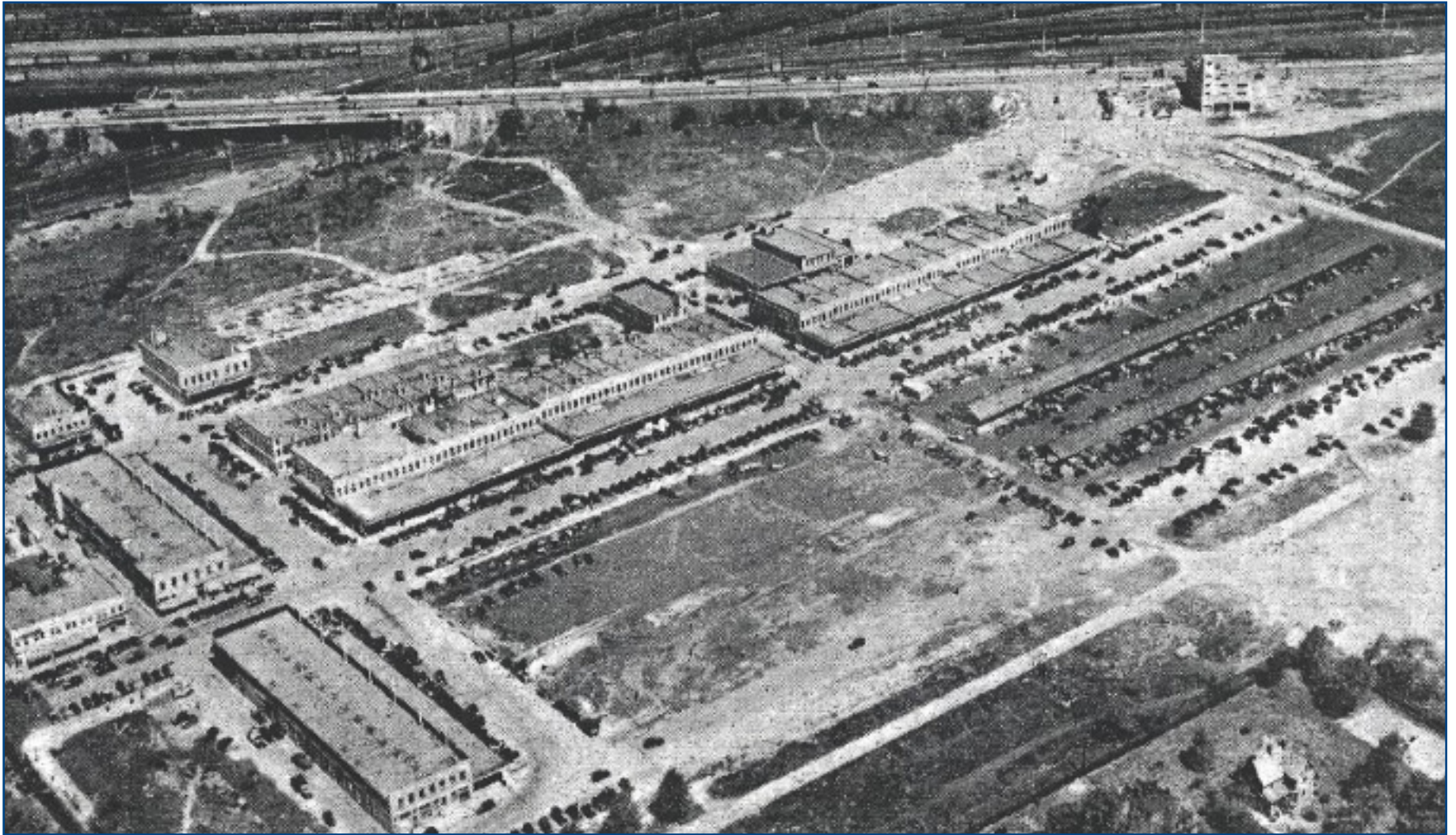
*Urban Design Team:*

CORE architecture +  
design

EHT Traceries, Inc.

Economic Research  
Associates





The Study Area - 1938, *The Washington Post*, 1938



## Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	02
I. Executive Summary .....	05
II. Introduction .....	09
III. History of The Market .....	17
IV. The Study Area Today .....	25
Existing Property Ownership .....	26
Existing Zoning .....	27
Existing Uses .....	28
Surrounding Neighborhoods .....	29
Comp Plan and Future Land Use Changes .....	30
Current Planning & Development Activity .....	32
Existing Environs .....	34
Economic & Real Estate Analysis of The Market .....	42
V. Issues and Opportunities .....	45
VI. Development Framework .....	49
Introduction .....	49
The Vision .....	50
Putting The Vision to Work .....	53
Land Use and Development Recommendations .....	54
Transportation and Public Realm Recommendations .....	58
Illustrative Site Plans .....	76
VII. Implementation .....	81
VIII. Acknowledgements .....	88
Appendix A	
History of the Union Terminal Market	
Appendix B	
Florida Avenue Market Phase 2 IMPLAN Market Impacts Report	
Appendix C	
The Public Process, Supporting Diagrams, and Community	
Comments	

---

- 2.01 Florida Avenue Market Site - *map of the study area within the context of the city*
- 2.02-03 DMPED Charrette - *study area diagrams from 2 of the teams participating in the DMPED charrette*
- 3.01 Advertisement for Opening Day, 1931 - *newspaper advertisement for opening day of the Union Market Terminal*
- 3.02 Farmers' Market at the Union Market Terminal, 1939 - *historic image of patrons at the Farmers' Market at the Union Market Terminal*
- 3.03 Key Architectural Elements of Bullock's Design - *diagram showing the key elements of the original Terminal buildings*
- 3.04 Building Chronology - *color coded map showing years of building construction in the Study Area*
- 3.06 Photo - *Little Tavern in 2007, originally built in 1939*
- 3.07 Union Terminal Market Buildings, 1949 - *historic image of original Terminal buildings*
- 4.01 Study Area Boundaries
- 4.02 Existing Property Ownership Map
- 4.03 Existing Zoning Map
- 4.04 Existing Land Uses
- 4.05 Enlarged 2006 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map
- 4.06 Enlarges 2006 Comprehensive Plan Generalized Policy Map
- 4.07 Nearby Developments - *diagram showing developments neighboring the Study Area*



## List of Figures

- 4.08-14 Photos - *signage throughout the study area*
- 4.15-18 Photos - *deteriorated building conditions in the study area*
- 4.19-23 Photos - *pedestrian safety concerns throughout the study area*
- 4.24 DDOT Final Priority Pedestrian Corridor Map - *map of the District showing priority corridors*
- 4.25 Enlarged Final Priority Pedestrian Corridor Map - *enlarged map showing priority corridors near the study area*
- 4.26 Traffic Flow - *diagram showing vehicular traffic flow throughout the study area*
- 4.27 1 - *enlarged parking conflict diagram at selected location in the study area*
- 4.28 2 - *enlarged parking conflict diagram at selected location in the study area*
- 4.29-31 Photos - *entrances into study area*
- 4.32 Photo - *view towards study area from Metro platform*
- 4.33 DDOT Proposed Bicycle Facilities Map - *map of the District showing proposed bike routes and facilities throughout the city*
- 4.34 Enlarged Proposed Bicycle Facilities Map - *enlarged map showing proposed bike routes and facilities throughout the city*
- 4.35 Photo - *retail stall in DC Farmers Market*
- 5.01 Photo - *current condition of original Union Market Terminal building and signage*
- 5.02 Photo - *view down 6th Street, NE towards the U.S. Capitol*
- 6.01 Zoning and Intensity Plan - *plan showing the zoning and intensity of development throughout the study area*
- 6.02 Streetscape Rendering - *Florida Avenue*
- 6.03 Street Section - *Florida Avenue*
- 6.04 Streetscape Rendering - *Fifth Street, NE*
- 6.05 Street Section - *Fifth Street, NE*
- 6.06 Streetscape Rendering - *Morse Street*
- 6.07 Street Section - *Morse Street*
- 6.08 Streetscape Rendering - *Sixth Street, NE*
- 6.09 Street Section - *Sixth Street, NE*
- 6.10 Street Section - *Third Street, NE*
- 6.11 Street Section - *Fourth Street, NE*
- 6.12 Street Section - *Neal Place, NE*
- 6.13 Street Section - *Penn Street, NE*
- 6.14 Illustrative 1 - *illustrative plan showing potential development scenario of the study area based on given recommendations*
- 6.15 Illustrative 2 - *illustrative plan showing potential development scenario of the study area based on given recommendations*
- note: all figures not otherwise credited are source: CORE, 2007-2009*





## I. Executive Summary

The Florida Avenue Market Study Area represents a very diverse and unique pocket of DC. It is one of the city's primary locations for industrial wholesale distribution, the location of the DC Farmer's Market, and home to several unique stores. The historic nature of some of the buildings and the functions of the area, offers a certain character and grittiness. However, the Study Area ("Florida Avenue Market Site" or "FAMS") is also significantly underdeveloped, has become increasingly rundown, and many of the structures need repair. Because of these issues, as well as its proximity to the city's northern gateway of New York Avenue, the area has come under substantial pressure to be renewed or redeveloped.

This pressure for redevelopment of the FAMS cannot be traced to one particular event, but rather several initiatives, legislative acts, and planning efforts. The most significant of these is the challenge laid out in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, which instructs the Office of Planning, in conjunction with the appropriate DC government agencies, area property owners, market tenants, and community stakeholders, to create a redevelopment framework that balances the tensions of the area, yet repositions the area to respond to current and future development opportunities and objectives. Other significant

catalysts for the redevelopment of the Study Area were the *New Town at Capital City Market Revitalization Development and Public/Private Partnership Emergency Act of 2006*, the *Northeast Gateway Revitalization Strategy*, and the *Gallaudet University Campus Plan*.

The Office of Planning, working with its consultant team, began creating the *Florida Avenue Market Study* in the spring of 2007. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the existing infrastructure, the economic vitality and potential, and the historic significance of the Study Area, in order to prepare a Small Area Plan. The Small Area Plan provides a framework for the strategic redevelopment of the Florida Avenue Market Study Area into a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood that protects the look and feel of the historic retail markets, while also providing a basis for new development and rehabilitation. It will be used to guide and evaluate future development proposals for the Study Area.

The *Florida Avenue Market Study* developed as a result of the following key factors:

- Historic significance of the Florida Avenue Market. This historical significance includes both the physical structures that make up the market area and the presence of the wholesale market throughout the history of the District of Columbia.
- Current conditions and infrastructure of the Study Area. This includes

## Executive Summary continued...

existing property ownership, zoning, uses, surrounding neighborhoods, neighboring development activity, as well as the physical conditions of buildings, signage, pedestrian safety, traffic/parking conflicts, and site access.

- Current economic and real estate analysis of the Study Area. This analysis was broken into four basic elements: an analysis of the economic impact of the market; a comparison with competing or complimentary area markets; an inventory of rents in the Study Area; and the wholesale market's feasibility expressed in the potential impact on rents if the Study Area includes redevelopment with market rate housing, office, and retail spaces.
- Community input. This was achieved through a series of community planning sessions, property ownership workshops, and through an Advisory Committee. The community responded to initial conceptual site plan ideas, and voiced their opinions on existing issues and what they would like to see the Study Area become.

As these factors were studied, it became apparent that there were several key issues that currently prohibit the Study Area from being developed to its full potential and from becoming a public destination point. These issues are:

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Building Conditions | • Traffic and Safety      |
| • Circulation         | • Environmental Impacts   |
| • Economic Growth     | • Neighboring Communities |
| • Image               | • Stakeholders            |
| • Economic Pressures  | • Zoning                  |

Even though there are many issues to balance, this strategic redevelopment initiative views them as opportunities: the opportunity to redevelop an isolated, under-developed, light-industrial area into a mixed-use development that is vibrant and integrates seamlessly into the surrounding urban fabric; the opportunity to create an area that will compliment other future development initiatives of the city, including *NoMA*, *Northeast Gateway Revitalization Strategy*, and *New York Avenue Corridor Study*; the opportunity to balance the objectives of the many stakeholders in the current market and in its future development; and the opportunity to preserve the unique and historical set of buildings that represent the area's original use.

In order to facilitate the realization of all these opportunities, this Small Area Plan incorporates a *Development Framework*. This *Development Framework* is to be utilized in two ways:

- 1.) To provide opportunities, guidance, and direction for developers and property owners as they propose redevelopment solutions.
- 2.) To provide the Office of Planning, the Zoning Commission, and the community with a comprehensive basis on which to evaluate proposed developments within the Study Area.

The *Development Framework* consists of a *Vision*, recommendations for land use, density, transportation and the public realm, and an *Illustrative Site Layouts*. The *Development Framework* divides the Study Area into three sub-areas with different levels of density: high, medium-high and moderate-medium. Future development should conform to these heights and densities. A mechanism for development exchange is proposed to encourage the retention of the historically significant Union Market Terminal buildings and promote development of an appropriate scale immediately adjacent to these original Terminal buildings.

The *Illustrative Site Layouts* show how the FAMS could *potentially* be developed based on the *Development Framework*. The placement of land use types, site amenities, and streetscape recommendations are all made in response to, and are a result of, the described site conditions and community concerns received during the public process.

Recommended streetscape renderings and individual street sections illustrate the goal of establishing a pedestrian-friendly environment, suggesting things such as vibrant restaurant and retail-based ground floors, “green” thoroughfares, and public

plazas or open space. They also suggest urban design elements that should be consistent throughout the redeveloped Study Area, and outline sustainable and environmentally-friendly design ideas that should characterize the area.

The Small Area Plan concludes with an *Implementation Chart*. This chart outlines specific goals from the *Development Framework* for the Florida Avenue Market Study Area, and includes recommendations on how to achieve these goals, who is responsible for tasks, the process, and a general timetable for implementation.

Florida Avenue Market Site (FAMS) location in city context

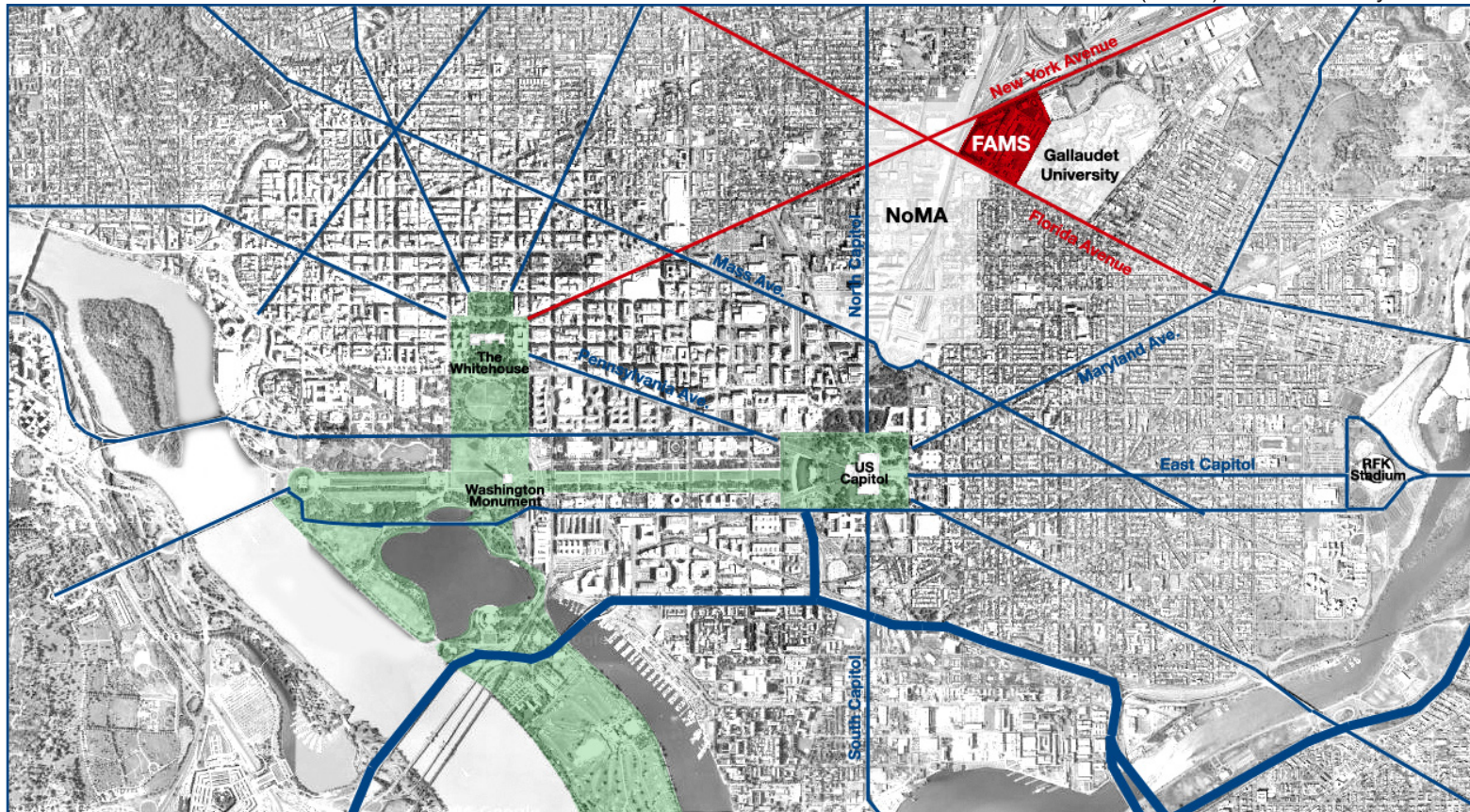


fig. 2.01



## II. Introduction

The Florida Avenue Market Site (“FAMS” or “Study Area”) is an approximately 40 acre area in Northeast DC, near the intersections of Florida Avenue and New York Avenue, between Penn Street and 6th Street. The FAMS is a distinct destination that is both an industrial wholesale distribution center and a one-stop retail spot for those residents who know of its unique stores. To some, the Florida Avenue Market is full of old world charm, grittiness and character. For others, the grittiness makes it a prime site for aggressive redevelopment. The challenge laid out in the *2006 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* instructs the Office of Planning, in conjunction with the appropriate DC government agencies, area property owners, market tenants, and community stakeholders, to create a redevelopment framework that balances the tensions mentioned above and yet repositions the site to respond to current and future development opportunities and objectives.

In order to accomplish this, the *Florida Avenue Market Study* capitalizes on the features that have helped to create the Study Area’s current form and function: superior transportation access and a distinct architectural character. Both of these are unique assets to the Study Area. This study examines the variety of main interests and their potential to impact the Study Area as

it exists today. Currently in the FAMS are several industrial and wholesale retail markets, a weekend farmer’s market, a few small restaurants/lounges, and a mix of various other small functions. The Study Area is significantly underdeveloped and has over time become increasingly rundown. Many structures need repair, and in some instances, the Market has contributed to situations that raise concern for public safety. Because of these issues, as well as its proximity to the northern city gateway of New York Avenue, the area has come under substantial pressure to be either renewed or redeveloped.

### Vision Statement

The *Florida Avenue Market Study* provides a framework for the strategic redevelopment of the Florida Avenue Market Study Area as a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood that protects the look and feel of the historic retail markets, while also providing a basis for new development and rehabilitation. This area will become a critical link between surrounding neighborhoods, the NoMA district, the New York Avenue/Florida Avenue Metro stop, and Gallaudet University. It will be designed to include a mix of commercial and residential uses and will feature pedestrian-oriented retail streets with open spaces and “green” thoroughfares. When implemented, the site will exemplify the District’s transit-oriented development policies and embody the Office of Planning’s objective of creating walkable, distinctive, and amenity-rich neighborhoods.

Introduction continued...

### A Changing City

The coming decade will likely be a time of rapid change in our city. After growing steadily for decades, our region is already seeing a historic decrease in vehicle use (down nearly 4 percent since 2007) and an increase in mass-transit ridership (up 6 percent since 2007). In this context, it is clear that the District, and the larger region, will see a shift in travel behavior. While we cannot accurately predict exactly how behavior will change, we can begin to cluster new developments and expand transportation choices, thereby shifting some people's daily trips from single occupancy vehicles to mass-transit, walking, or biking.

At the same time, the recent difficulties in the home mortgage industry have revealed the relative strengths and weakness of home values in the region. The District, because of its stable employment base and unique position as the federal city, is in a more favorable position than our neighboring jurisdictions. Neighborhoods like H Street, NE and Capitol Hill have fared much better than suburban enclaves because of their access to mass-transit, local retail, and a variety of housing choices. As the District's comparative housing advantage continues to strengthen, we will see changes in housing preferences. Commuting up to two hours a day is often very demanding. As people begin to realize that a "close-to-the-center" residence with low transportation costs is cheaper than the cost of commuting to a far-away home, they are more critically weighing their commuting vs. residence alternatives.

Because of this, the FAMS is poised to take advantage of changing transit and housing preferences to create a vibrant, attractive, and walkable neighborhood and commercial district. Redevelopment of the site will also offer expanded choices to the adjacent neighborhoods of Near Northeast, Trinidad, and Gallaudet University, all of which have long been underserved by retail and commercial amenities.

### Planning and Development Context

The pressure for exploring the redevelopment potential of the FAMS cannot be traced back to a single event, but rather the idea resulted from several different planning and strategic development discussions. The following section discusses these initiatives in order to give a greater context to the recommendations and development strategy proposed in this plan.

#### The Comprehensive Plan

According to the Upper Northeast Area Element of *The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, 2006*, the Florida Avenue Market Site is located in a special treatment area known as "Northeast #1/Eckington" and requires coordinated planning programs. The coordinated planning program called for in the

*Comprehensive Plan* is achieved through a Small Area Plan. The *Comprehensive Plan* describes the intent of such a plan as to “guide long-range development, stabilize and improve neighborhoods, achieve citywide goals, and attain economic and community benefits.” It goes on to say that it is a community-driven planning tool to outline policies, actions, and the recommendations for small geographic areas in the city.

The *Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes the need for critical urban design, especially at large redevelopment sites such as the Florida Avenue Market. The Upper Northeast Area Element of the *Comprehensive Plan* calls for the Florida Avenue Market to be redeveloped into a regional destination that may include residential, dining, entertainment, office, hotel, and wholesale food uses. The wholesale market and the adjacent DC Farmers Market are important but undervalued amenities that should be preserved, upgraded, and more effectively marketed. (UNE-2.1.2: Capitol City Market)

### **The Legislation**

The *New Town at Capital City Market Revitalization Development and Public/Private Partnership Emergency Act of 2006* (New Town Legislation) was enacted by the Council of the District of

Columbia in December 2006. This legislation began the process of addressing issues at the Florida Avenue Market Study Area. The New Town Legislation included specific site requirements and included a request for the Mayor to prepare a final conceptual plan for the Market site that was based on input from key community stakeholders, Market users, and property owners. The Office of Planning, working with its consultant team, began creating the *Florida Avenue Market Study* in April 2007.

### **Area Planning**

The *Northeast Gateway Revitalization Strategy*, prepared in 2006 by the DC Office of Planning, identifies the FAMS as one of four redevelopment opportunity areas. This plan recommends that the FAMS become a mixed-use destination that celebrates local food, history, culture, and business. The FAMS could offer an indoor-outdoor retail food market and eating and drinking establishments, as well as wholesale food distribution. This strategy suggests that the existing wholesale market operations would remain and be enhanced. It further recommends that the existing retail portion of the market (DC Farmers Market) be redeveloped with its functions expanded for a broader and more exciting mix of food and entertainment.

*North of Massachusetts Avenue (NoMA) Vision Plan and Development Strategy*, completed in 2007, identifies the FAMS as a destination for expanded retail around a food theme. The *NoMA Plan* encourages mixed-use development



Introduction continued...

that respects the preservation of historic buildings and the market functions. It notes the economic significance of the Market as a wholesale area, as well as a distribution and employment center. The *NoMA Plan* states that other issues like cultural tourism, heritage development, transportation, urban design/public realm, and pedestrian environment also be addressed in future planning for the site.

### **Gallaudet University Campus Plan & Deaf Space Concept**

The Study Area is located adjacent to historic Gallaudet University, a world-renowned academic and cultural center for the deaf community. As a university exclusively for the deaf, it has an extended community of current students, graduates, professors, administrators, and staff that live and work in the immediate neighborhood and surrounding region. Through university classes and early-stage campus planning initiatives, Gallaudet has explored the concept of planning and designing physical space for deaf people. Gallaudet is firmly committed to opening up its campus and connecting it to the broader community across 6th Street, which forms the western boundary of the campus. Several primary design principles developed by the university are potentially applicable to the planning and design of the Study Area, particularly on 6th Street:

- Optimize visual and physical connectivity
- Optimize visual cues for spatial awareness
- Allow space for visual communication
- Minimize barriers to visual communication
- Provide lighting conditions for visual communication and spatial awareness

### **The Planning Process**

The Office of Planning, working with its consultant team, began developing the *Florida Avenue Market Study* in the spring of 2007. The goal of the study was to evaluate the existing infrastructure, the economic vitality and potential, and the historic significance, in order to prepare a Small Area Plan to guide and evaluate future development proposals.

In addition to the studies and initiatives described above, various other activities informed the planning process, including site analysis, community planning sessions, market studies, and property owner workshops. The Office of Planning also created an Advisory Committee to help guide the process. It consisted of representatives from Ward 5 and Ward 6 ANCs (wards which will be directly impacted), civic associations, the Offices of Wards 5 and 6 Councilmembers Thomas and Wells, Gallaudet University, and Apollo Development.

A series of public meetings was held to solicit feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders. These meetings included formal presentations, as well as break out groups with various participants. Meetings were held during the evening and the daytime to accommodate the greatest number of interested stakeholders.

These meetings were held on the following days:

- Public Meeting #1- April 24, 2007
- Public Meeting #2- May 14, 2007
- Public Meeting #3- May 30, 2007
- Advisory Committee Meeting #1- August 28, 2007
- Public Meeting #4- October 3, 2007

After the fourth community meetings, the Office of Planning conducted a market study of the area to determine the economic strength of the wholesale/retail market and its position in the District's economy. A summary of this study is included later in this report. At the same time, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development held a series of meetings and a charrette with market-area property owners to identify key opportunities and shared areas of interest for the market. The charrette brought together representatives from the New Town

Development, J Street Development and Edens & Avant (EAJ), Gallaudet University, and the District. All of these entities have key ownership or stakes within the Study Area. The main objective was to outline the key differences and commonalities between each of the stakeholder's goals for the area. The result of those sessions informed this planning process.

The community planning sessions also resulted in a set of principles that the Office of Planning has drawn upon to create the final plan. These include:

- Mitigate negative impacts of mixed-use development on the economic vitality of the wholesale market;
- Encourage mixed-use development with ground-floor retail and restaurant use along Florida Avenue that serves as a gateway into the site;
- Improve urban design and safety along 6th Street to calm traffic and encourage positive interaction with the Gallaudet campus and the greater community;
- Ensure that density steps down from the rail tracks to the existing residential neighborhoods;
- Introduce open space, civic, cultural, and recreational uses into the development;
- Preserve historic buildings where possible;
- Create a pedestrian-friendly environment with safe linkages to Metro, Gallaudet University, and neighborhoods south of Florida Avenue, NE; and
- Employ traffic calming strategies to reduce pedestrian/truck conflicts

Introduction continued...

Feedback from the community and the planning process directly informed and impacted the creation of the *Development Framework* chapter, including a *Vision*, recommendations for land use, density, transportation and the public realm. Within the chapter is also a series of illustrative concept renderings and street sections for key portions of the Study Area, which show how the FAMS could *potentially* be developed based on the recommendations in the plan. The location of land use uses, the inclusion and site amenities, “green” pedestrian thoroughfares, and recommendations on streetscape solutions are all made in response to, and are a result of, the planning process. The study concludes with a description of the implementation steps needed to achieve this development concept.

## Team Site Diagrams from DMEPD Charrette



fig. 2.02 (source: Hansel Bauman, 2008)



fig. 2.03 (source: Hansel Bauman, 2008)

Advertisement for Opening Day, 1931



fig. 3.01 (source: *The Washington Post*, 1931)

Farmers' Market at the Union Market Terminal, 1939



fig. 3.02 (source: Wymer Collection, *Evening Star*, Historical Society of Washington D.C., 1939)

### III. History of The Market

Since the city's inception, public markets have occupied a central role in the lives of Washingtonians. Through the mid-twentieth century, public markets supplied the District's households and businesses with fresh produce, meat and other foodstuffs on a daily basis. The precursor to the Florida Avenue Market was Center Market, which was located in the square bounded by Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues and Seventh and Ninth Streets, NW (the site of the present-day National Archives Building). Built in 1802, Center Market encompassed a farmers' market with over a thousand vendors. The retail-oriented farmers' market primarily provided seasonal goods to households. Commission houses—privately owned wholesale warehouses—were also clustered near Center Market. The commission houses served commercial operations such as stores, restaurants, and hotels. The farmers' market in Center Market enjoyed reciprocity with the nearby commission houses; businesses would shop at both the farmers' market and the commission houses. Although the farmers could not provide a steady supply of produce year round, the commission houses ensured that large purchasers would continue to shop at Center Market.

In 1926, the Public Buildings Act called for the redevelopment of the Federal Triangle area, which encompassed Center Market. Although the market's stalls bustled, the surrounding area had fallen on hard

times. Following the act, Congress directed the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to study potential sites for a new farmers' market. A central concern of the Commissioners was that the farmers' market and wholesale industry be preserved in a single location. The Commissioners sought a centrally-located site with proximity to highways, railroads, and waterways. These criteria led the Commissioners to propose a site on the blocks bounded by 10th and 11th streets and E and G streets in Southwest Washington, D.C. This recommendation sparked great controversy on Capitol Hill. Maryland farmers favored a site closer to their fields and lobbied Congress to select a site in Northeast DC. Neighborhood organizations also joined the fray.

While Congress debated the merits of the proposed Southwest site, a group of commission merchants began acting on their own accord to secure a location for a private wholesale market in Northeast DC. In 1928, the federation of wholesalers, later known as the Union Terminal Market Association, purchased 40 acres of the Patterson Tract bounded by Florida Avenue, NE on the south, Sixth Street, NE on the east, Penn Street, NE on the north and the railroad right-of-way to the west. This site provided easy access to the railroad freight yards northeast of Union Station. The Union Terminal Market Association announced that the market would encompass "40 stores of the most modern design and equipment."

Following this announcement, the farmers from the doomed Center Market voted to join the commission merchants in relocating to the Patterson Tract. In return,



History of The Market continued...

#### Key Architectural Elements of Bullock's Design

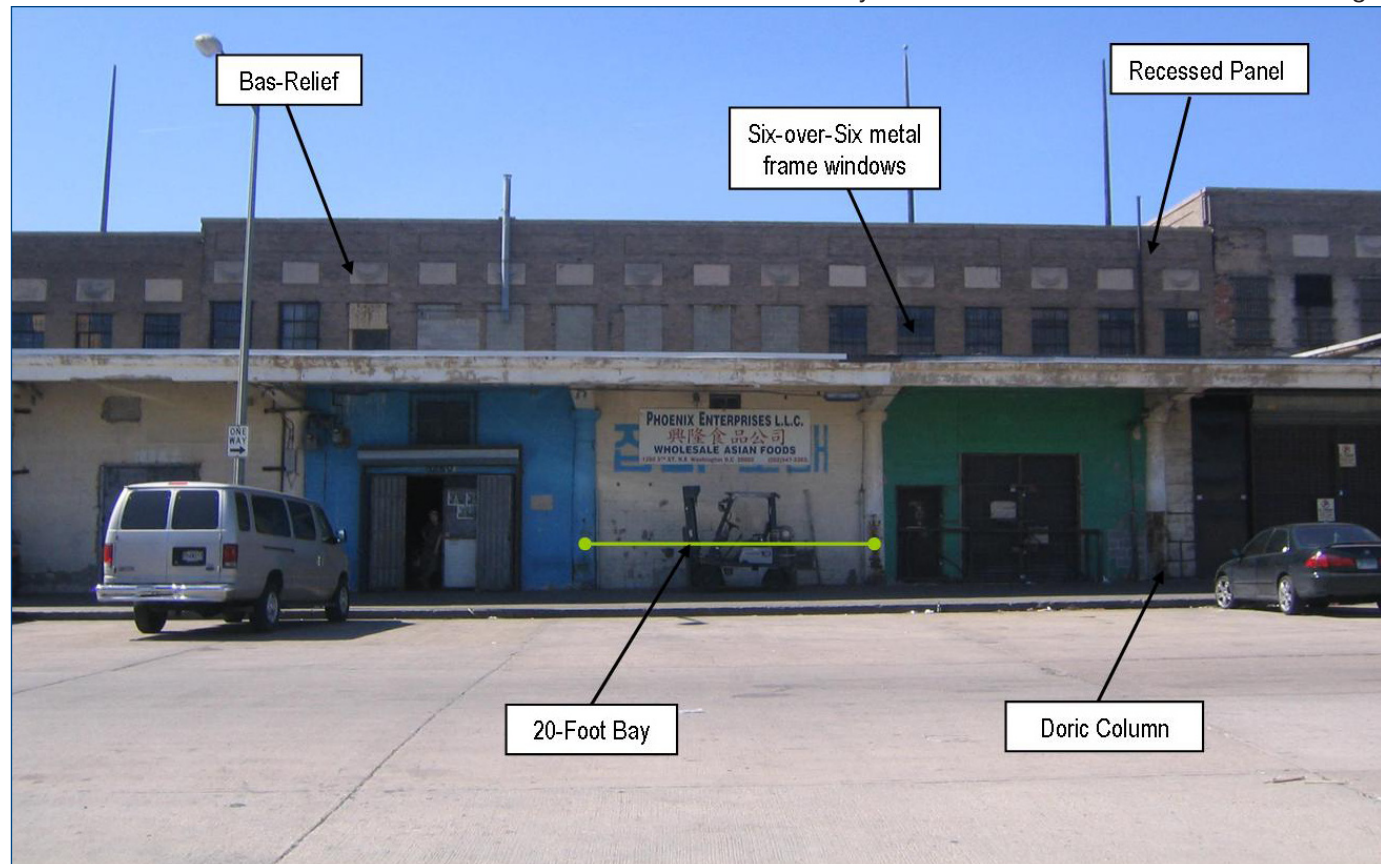


fig. 3.03 (source: *Traceries*, 2007)



the Union Terminal Market Association agreed to construct a sheltered open-air farmers' market on a five-acre site adjacent to the wholesale operations. This action preserved a combined retail/wholesale market in D.C. and precluded the development of a public market in Southwest D.C.

Following this announcement, the farmers from the doomed Center Market voted to join the commission merchants in relocating to the Patterson Tract. In return, the Union Terminal Market Association agreed to construct a sheltered open-air farmers' market on a five-acre site adjacent to the wholesale operations. This action preserved a combined retail/wholesale market in DC and precluded the development of a public market in Southwest DC.

Construction of the \$1 million Union Terminal Market—the original name of the Florida Avenue Market—began in 1929 under the supervision of local architect E. L. Bullock. The warehouses designed by Bullock are two-story buff brick buildings in a strict Classical style. The buildings are characterized by their overall symmetry and Classical details. Bullock's design was easily replicated and arranged in multiples to form a continuous building the length of each block. The typical building has a covered loading area supported by Doric columns. An arcade connects the continuous line of loading areas.

The standard bay for the buildings, the area between the columns at the arcade, defines ownership and tenancy. The typical second story features three symmetrically-placed windows (originally six-over-six metal frame windows) topped with concrete bas-reliefs. The effect of the building design is realized in the repetition of the building type throughout an entire block where a sense of order and master planning are evident.

The Union Terminal Market officially opened on February 15, 1931. The Evening Star described the layout and amenities of the new Market: "Ample space is provided for the immediate needs of wholesalers...Wide streets are being provided to handle present and future traffic. Extensive parking will be available. The Market's proximity to the center of population, the railroad facilities, the economic distribution factors and the buildings are regarded as valuable assets." The Boyd's City Directory lists the types of operations that constituted the Market in its early days. Although the Market was primarily comprised of wholesale operations, several retail functions were also interspersed throughout the site. In 1932, the Union Terminal Market included 27 produce vendors, seven meat vendors, four delicatessens, two wholesale confectionary companies, and several merchants specializing in eggs or fish. Throughout the 1930s, the construction of buildings continued in the Market. This second phase of construction was characterized by smaller buildings with separate architects. However, the design of these buildings was heavily influenced by the design of the Market's original buildings.

### History of The Market continued...

For three decades, the farmers' market continued to operate near the wholesale market, much as it had done at Center Market. In the era of urban renewal, however, city officials came to see this timeless method of food distribution as a public health threat. In 1962, a health inspector found that "hot weather, fast breeding flies and filthy conditions have brought the threat of disease to the market." Consequently, the city restricted sales in the farmers' market to fresh fruit and vegetables. The market management warned, "If people can't get meat and eggs here, they aren't going to come here at all." Soon after the ban went into effect, The Washington Post reported that the farmers' market looked like a graveyard. In 1964, the land adjacent to the Union Terminal Market was sold from underneath the moribund farmers' market. The dismantling of the Union Terminal farmers' market marked the end of an era in Washington, DC. In 1967, a modern building was constructed in the Union Terminal Market to replace what had been the last outdoor farmers' market in the city.

Despite the turbulence surrounding the farmers' market, wholesale operations at the Union Terminal Market continued to thrive. During the 1950s, new infill warehouses were constructed alongside the 1930s storefronts. In 1958, a U.S.D.A. report found that nearly all the major wholesalers in Washington DC were located in the Union Terminal Market. However, the Market was entering a period of transition. Supermarkets were establishing their own distribution centers, thus diffusing the role of the Union Terminal Market. When the Market was built, its wide streets were seen as a solution to a problem that had long plagued DC's

markets: congestion. But by the late 20th century, tractor-trailers were jamming the Union Terminal Markets' streets. The Market was also showing signs of a half a century of industrial use. Merchants began leaving the aging Market for modern facilities in the suburbs.

In the early 1980s, the District purchased eight acres adjacent to the western boundary of the Market. The investment was intended to stimulate development of the wholesale food industry in the city. As part of the \$2 million economic development initiative, the District partnered with local developers and wholesale merchants to construct a 200,000 square foot L-shaped building on the city-owned property. The auxiliary building was to enable businesses to expand their operations on-site rather than relocate to a suburban location. Many of the new food suppliers that moved into the expanded market space were owned by Chinese and Korean immigrants. At the same time, new immigrant-owned businesses were also moving into the old market as spaces were vacated. The influx of these diverse wholesalers kept the Market fully occupied despite the flight of several large businesses.

### Building Chronology

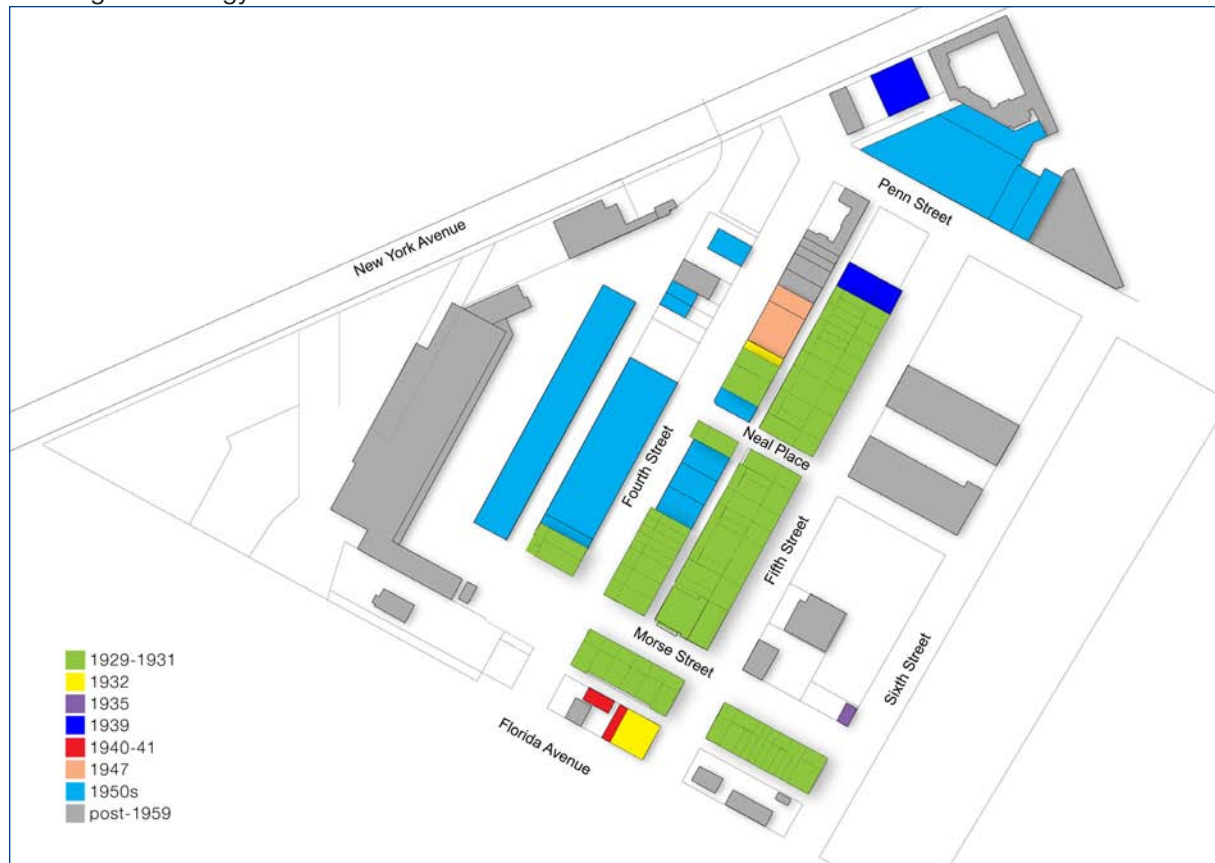


fig. 3.04 (source: *Tracerries*)

### History of The Market continued...

The Union Terminal Market is a historically and architecturally significant place. Unlike the public markets that preceded it, the Union Terminal Market was developed by a private cooperative of wholesale merchants. The Union Terminal Market Association saw the market as a means to preserve and enhance the unique relationship that existed between wholesale and retail merchants at Center Market. The Union Terminal Market is also distinguished by its design. Unlike previous markets in DC, the Union Terminal Market is not encompassed in a single building. The historic core of the Union Terminal Market is comprised of five blocks lined with two-story buff brick buildings. The repetition of E. L. Bullock's Classical design gives the market an architectural rhythm and sense of cohesion. The design and importance of the Union Terminal Market in the history and development of the District of Columbia suggests the opportunity to preserve significant buildings. Preservation could be accomplished through local or national historic designation.

In particular, the buildings erected during the Market's initial phase of construction, 1929-1931, are considered eligible for listing in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites. These market buildings present an important and cohesive collection of uniformly designed and executed market structures—a rare survivor of this essential building type in the city today. Inspired by the demolition of the city's Center Market, but built as a private venture to accommodate the wholesale and retail food needs of the city's residents, the markets serve as a physical embodiment of an important urban development in the city's history.

In addition to the Market buildings, the site is also home to a Little Tavern building on Morse Street, also considered eligible for listing in the DC Inventory. Harry Duncan founded the Little Tavern hamburger chain in 1927 in Kentucky. A year after he moved his family to the District, the chain opened its first DC location at the Market. By 1939, there were 21 Little Taverns in DC, all following a standard “Tudor cottage” style remarkable for its innovative use of modern materials in an historic style. The Morse Street Little Tavern, one of a handful of Little Tavern survivors in the city, remains intact to its original configuration and modest size and retains much of its original materials.

Little Tavern

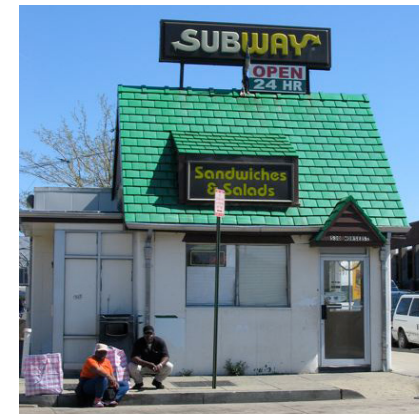


fig. 3.05

Union Terminal Market Buildings, 1949



fig.3.06 (source: Wymer Collection, Evening Star, Historical Society of Washington D.C., 1949)





## IV. The Study Area Today

Currently, there are many factors influencing the Study Area that are significant in defining its character. These factors will also determine how the area can or will be redeveloped in the future.

In addition to the typical site conditions, such as environmental factors, location within the city, topography, etc., the site has several other unique conditions affecting it. They include:

- A complex property ownership that could potentially make acquiring continuous parcels of land needed for larger developments more difficult;
- Existing low bulk commercial and light industrial zoning that does not permit residential uses;
- Numerous under-developed and vacant sites throughout the entire area;
- A disparate variety of existing land uses;
- Two projects on or near the site already being developed through the PUD process;
- Other planning efforts being developed for the area;
- The site's proposed changes in land use according to the *2006 Comprehensive Plan*
- Economic and real estate potentials or limitations of the area with its current uses.

Potential future redevelopment of the area needs to be cognizant of the existing conditions of signage/wayfinding, pedestrian safety, traffic and parking, site access, and the condition of existing buildings.

Study Area Boundaries



fig. 4.01



## Existing Property Ownership

The Study Area, extending from just north of Penn Street to Florida Avenue, and from New York Avenue to 6th Street, NE, currently has 120 lots, owned by approximately 68 different entities. Current owners of the largest parcels of land include Gallaudet University, Maurice Electric, Edens & Avant/J Street Development, and Sang Oh & Company. The remaining lots are owned by individuals. The DC Government owns all streets throughout the area.

Many of the buildings are subdivided to support various sized tenants ranging from large-scale wholesalers to small dry good start-ups. Also, many of the buildings are leased. There is over one million square feet of lot area within the study boundaries.



fig. 4.02

## Existing Zoning

Existing Zoning Map

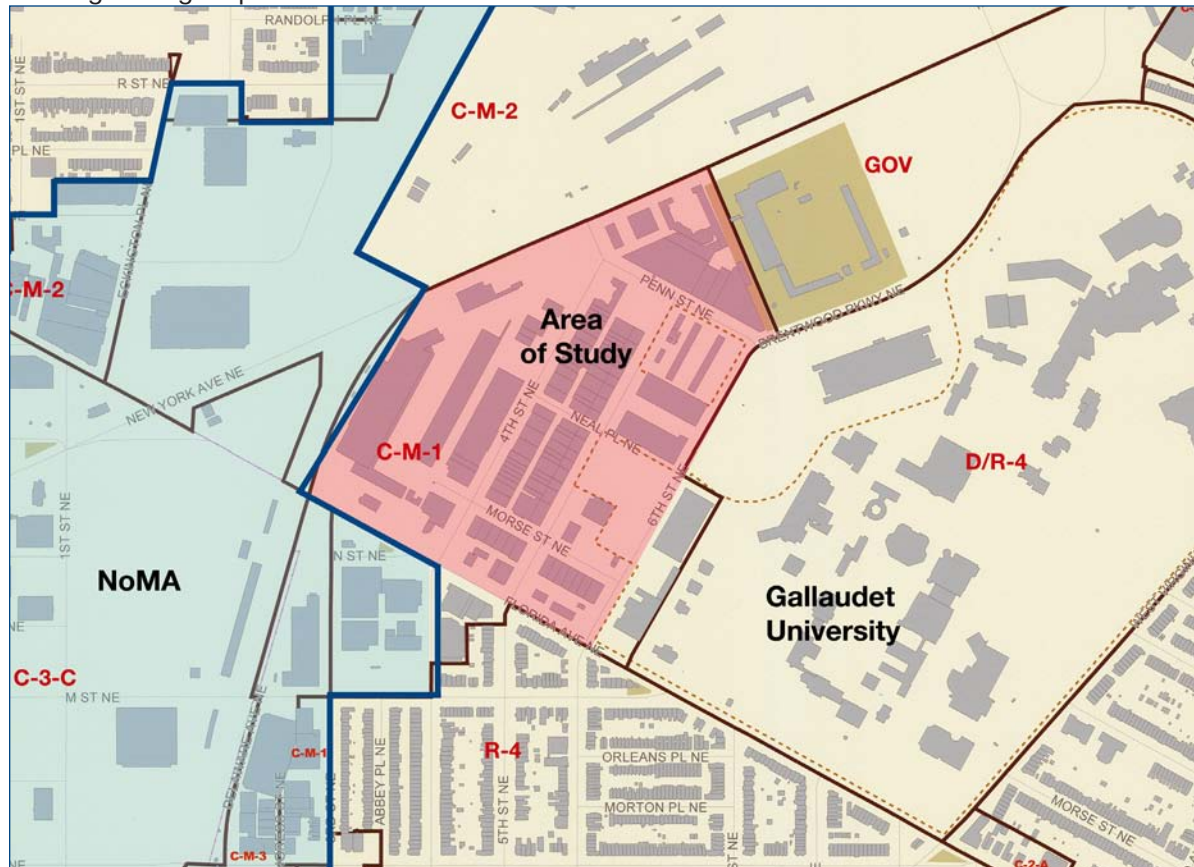


fig. 4.03

The area is currently zoned C-M-1. This permits the development of low bulk commercial and light manufacturing uses to a FAR of 3.0 and a maximum structure height of 40'-0". No new residential development is permitted under this zoning.

In contrast, the neighboring NoMA development plan is zoned as C-3-C. Among other things, this allows for medium/high density development including office, retail, housing, and mixed use. A maximum building height of 90'-0" is allowed by right under this zoning, although greater heights of up to 130' are permitted through Transfer of Development right (TDR) processes or through a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Other surrounding zoning includes R-4, (low density residential – detached and rowhouse single family dwellings and flats) to the south; C-M-2 (medium bulk commercial/light manufacturing, maximum by-right building height of 60'-0" or 90'-0" with a PUD) to the north; and D/R-4 on the campus of Gallaudet University to the east.

## Existing Uses

The Study Area currently consists of a number of different building uses and types, ranging from wholesale, farmers and flea markets, public retail, parking, several small restaurants/lounges, automotive repair or gas stations, office space, and two hotels. The wholesale function is the primary use of the area and always has been. These wholesale functions include meat, produce, beverages, some textiles, and other general merchandise. Many of the retail vendors throughout the area and in the DC Farmers Market sell items in bulk for the general public. Various Asian and African ethnic or specialty wholesale items are also sold throughout the area.



## Surrounding Neighborhoods

As previously shown, the Study Area is located in the Upper Northeast element of the Comprehensive Plan and is surrounded by several neighborhoods including Ivy City, Trinidad, and NoMA. All three of these neighborhoods have been undergoing changes over the last 10 years. Ivy City includes Gallaudet University, which was established in area in 1860 and has grown into the nation's premier college for the deaf and hearing impaired.

In NoMA, the opening of the New York Avenue Metro station has helped to bring Class A office development near the Study Area, with an additional 20 million square feet of development planned or under construction in the next few years. In addition to new office space, 1,200 hotel rooms and one million square feet of retail space are planned. Over 25,000 employees already come into the area on a daily basis to work at places such as CNN, CareFirst and Sirius/XM Satellite radio.

Near Northeast, Ivy City, and Trinidad, located to the north of the Study Area, differ from NoMA because they are primarily residential neighborhoods with numerous row houses and single-family dwellings. Historically, these areas have been stable, middle-class neighborhoods. However, today Ivy City and Trinidad are experiencing many of the same challenges facing other

neighborhoods within the District. Rising housing prices make it very difficult for long-term residents to afford to live in these neighborhoods, while vacant property and rising foreclosures add other threats to neighborhood stabilization. In December 2008, the District announced an initiative to turn 37 vacant properties in Ivy City into affordable and market-rate housing for families to help increase the homeownership rate within the community. The District will contribute land and a development subsidy to ensure that some of the homes are affordable to residents earning 30 percent of the area median income.

As the District works to address housing challenges, convenient access to public transportation and other amenities will continue to make these areas more desirable in the future. As these neighborhoods continue to change and grow, their connection and integration with the Study Area will become increasingly important as it provides the much needed retail, housing and park development that will benefit Ivy City, Trinidad, and the other surrounding neighborhoods.



## Comp Plan and Future Land Use Changes

The District's 2006 *Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map* defines the Study Area as "Production, Distribution, and Repair." Figure 26.1 shows a magnified portion of the map, where this designation is indicated by a light purple color. This future land use is consistent with the site's current land uses.

However, the 2006 *Comprehensive Plan Generalized Policy Map and the Area Elements* indicate that this is a land use change area by the year 2025. Figure 27.1, a magnified portion of the *Generalized Policy Map*, shows this area as bright red, which is defined as "Multi-Neighborhood Center." This use means that a high emphasis should be placed on a variety of retail and service oriented businesses, with mixed-use infill development encouraged to provide new retail and service uses and additional housing and job opportunities.

Furthermore, the *Area Elements - Upper Northeast* section of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan says to, "Redevelop the Capital City Market [Florida Avenue Market] into a regional destination that may

Enlarged 2006 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map

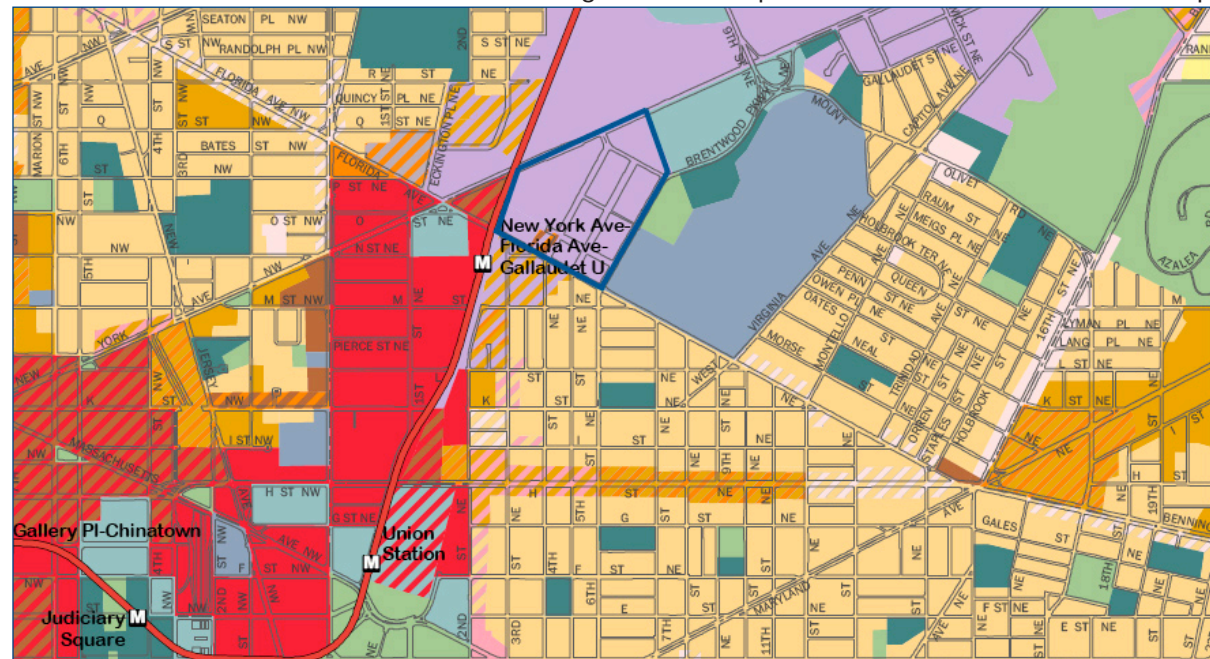


fig. 4.05

Enlarged 2006 Comprehensive Plan Generalized Policy Map

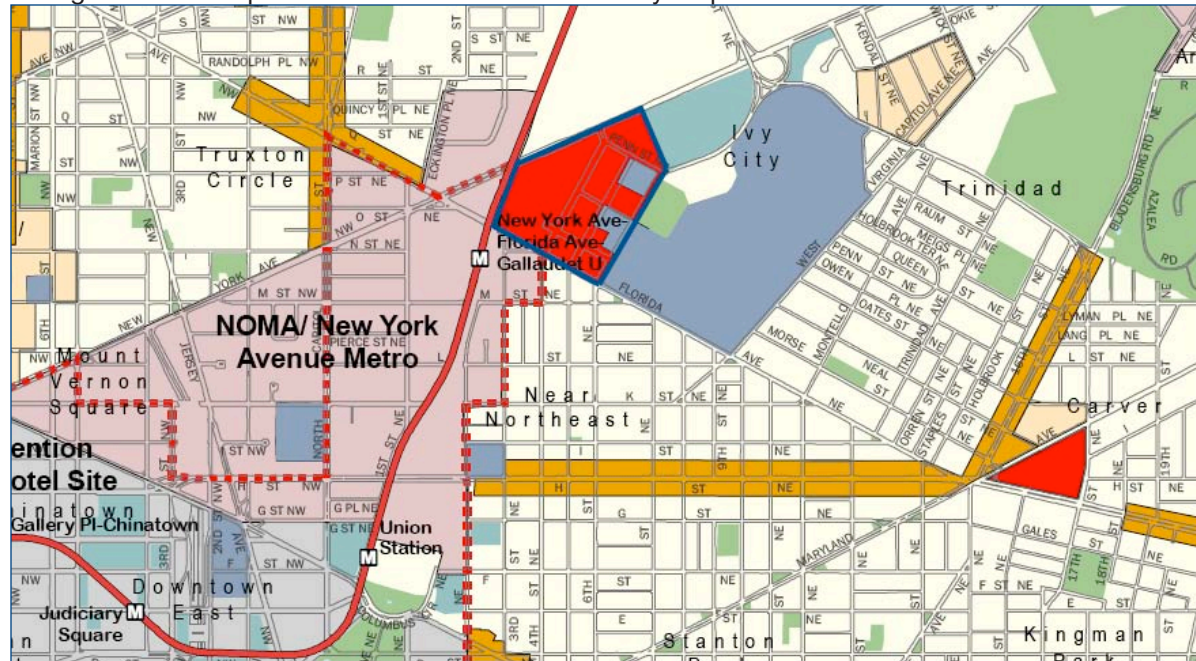


fig. 4.06

include residential, dining, entertainment, office, hotel, and wholesale food uses. The wholesale market and the adjacent DC Farmers Market are important but undervalued amenities that should be preserved, upgraded, and more effectively marketed.” (UNE-2.1.2)

Section UNE-2.1.A goes on to say that these new land uses for future land use maps should be determined through a “collaborative process that involves the landowners and tenants, the project developers, the District government, and the community.

The coordinated planning program called for in the *Comprehensive Plan* is achieved through a Small Area Plan. The *Comprehensive Plan* describes the intent of such plans to “guide long-range development, stabilize and improve neighborhoods, achieve citywide goals, and attain economic and community benefits.” It provides guidance on how this area of the city can shift from “Production, Distribution, and Repair” to a “Multi-Neighborhood Center.”

## Current Planning & Development Activity

There are currently two projects on or near the site that have applied for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). These projects directly effect the Study Area's strategic redevelopment. Both developments have required either a permanent zoning map change or a project-specific zoning change to permit residential use in the industrially-zoned area.

The first project, indicated by the number (1) in figure 29.1, is the Washington Gateway Project. It is to be a 130 feet tall, three tower development, containing retail space, office space, residential space, and hotel space. Even though this project is not within the boundaries of the Study Area, it is important to note because of its height and density. The city's approval of this PUD helps set a precedent for other future developments along New York Avenue.

The second project, indicated by the number (2) in figure 29.1, is the Gateway Market & Residences. The approved PUD for this development allows for a total maximum height of 120 feet with retail, office, and residential uses. Along Florida Avenue, the ground floor will provide space for two traditional retail or service spaces (such as a bank or restaurant) and some flexible space for market-like retail stalls. The ground floor at Morse Street will be more of this same type of flexible space. There is no retail along Fourth Street, but it does provide an entry to residential and community (ANC) space.

Washington Gateway Project (#1) is actually a part of this development. NoMA intends to redevelop approximately 358 acres (or 50 city blocks) into 10,000 - 13,000 new residential units, providing housing for between 16,000 and 24,000 people and into 10-13 million square feet of new office space, which will provide employment opportunities for between 40, 000 and 58,000 daytime workers. Numerous other civic and public amenities are also included in the plan. NoMA's ultimate goal is to provide "A vibrant neighborhood with a mix of residential, commercial, recreation, and supporting retail uses."

**Planned Unit Development (PUD)** - A large-scale development in which conventional zoning standards (such as setbacks and height limits) are relaxed in order to conserve sensitive areas, promote the creation of public amenities such as parks and plazas, and encourage the mixing of different land uses. *(from the 2006 Comprehensive Plan)*



## Nearby Developments



fig. 4.07

The Study Area's direct adjacency to this major initiative is very important. It has the potential to:

- Help pull more positive development to the east.
- Create a stronger connection across Florida Avenue.
- Strengthen the connection to the Metro and other public transportation.
- Set a precedent for appropriate size, density, and character for new development.

## Existing Environs

**Signage/Wayfinding:** Over the last 75 years, the Study Area has evolved culturally due to demographic shifts, thus giving it an ethnically-diverse identity, perhaps one of the most diverse pockets in the city. The Florida Avenue Market is beloved by some locals for its “authenticity.”

However, general public awareness of the Study Area’s offerings remains limited due to poor signage and wayfinding devices on the site. The Market itself is not clearly identified and no branding exists to help distinguish it or provide a sense of place. The historic flagpoles atop some of the original structures are still visible, but much of the signage that exists throughout the site is faded, missing characters, or illegible.



fig. 4.13



fig. 4.08

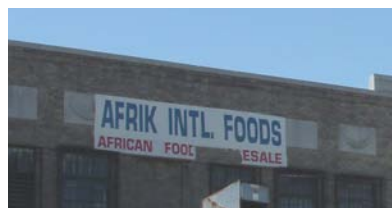


fig. 4.09

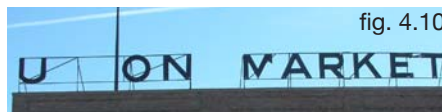


fig. 4.10



fig. 4.11



fig. 4.12



fig. 4.14



fig. 4.15

**Condition of Buildings:** The Study Area has a wide range of building scales and designs that are a result of various changes in building construction over time. Many of the structures are slab on grade, with very few utilizing second floor space. There have also been significant changes to many of the original historic buildings throughout the site, yet many of their integral elements remain visible and reflect the original design of the Market buildings. It has also become an example of deterioration and poor upkeep. The historic buildings, as well as the more recent additions to the area, suffer from weather deterioration, inappropriate infill, and an overall breakdown in materials, largely due to tough industrial use and lack of maintenance.



fig. 4.16



fig. 4.17



fig. 4.18



**Pedestrian Safety:** Currently, the area is not very pedestrian friendly, due to the overlapping mix of vehicles (including semi-trailer trucks) and people. The site is most active in the early morning; the lack of activity at night creates a safety concern. Most of the buildings are not handicap accessible and the sidewalks often double as loading docks. One-way streets have only minimally improved traffic flow throughout the area. Often, trash in the streets is a by-product of the industrial and wholesale uses. Green space and trees are very few, with no public seating or streetscaping to encourage pedestrian traffic through the site to/from Gallaudet University to the New York Avenue/ Florida Avenue Metro Station. New York Avenue is also one of the streets identified by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) as a “Priority Corridor” in its *2008 Pedestrian Master Plan*. An enlarged portion of the Final Priority Pedestrian Corridor Map, showing the Study Area can be seen in figure 35.2. The red lines indicate a priority corridor.



fig. 4.22



fig. 4.19



fig. 4.20



fig. 4.21



fig. 4.23

## DDOT Final Priority Pedestrian Corridor Map

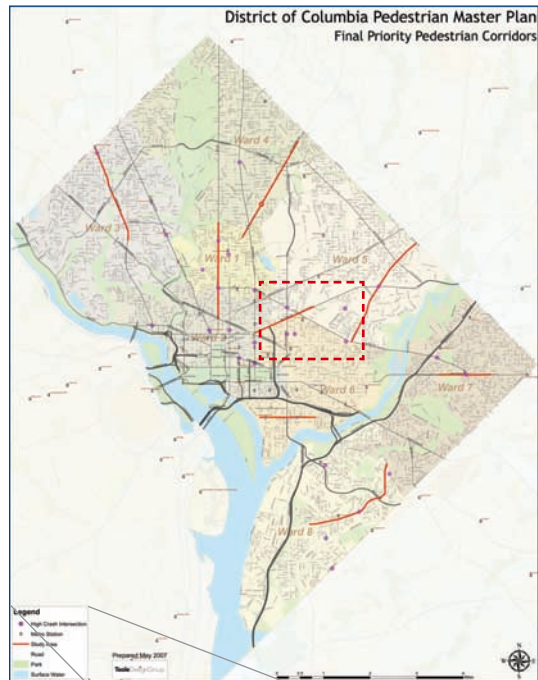


fig. 4.24

## Enlarged Final Priority Pedestrian Corridor Map

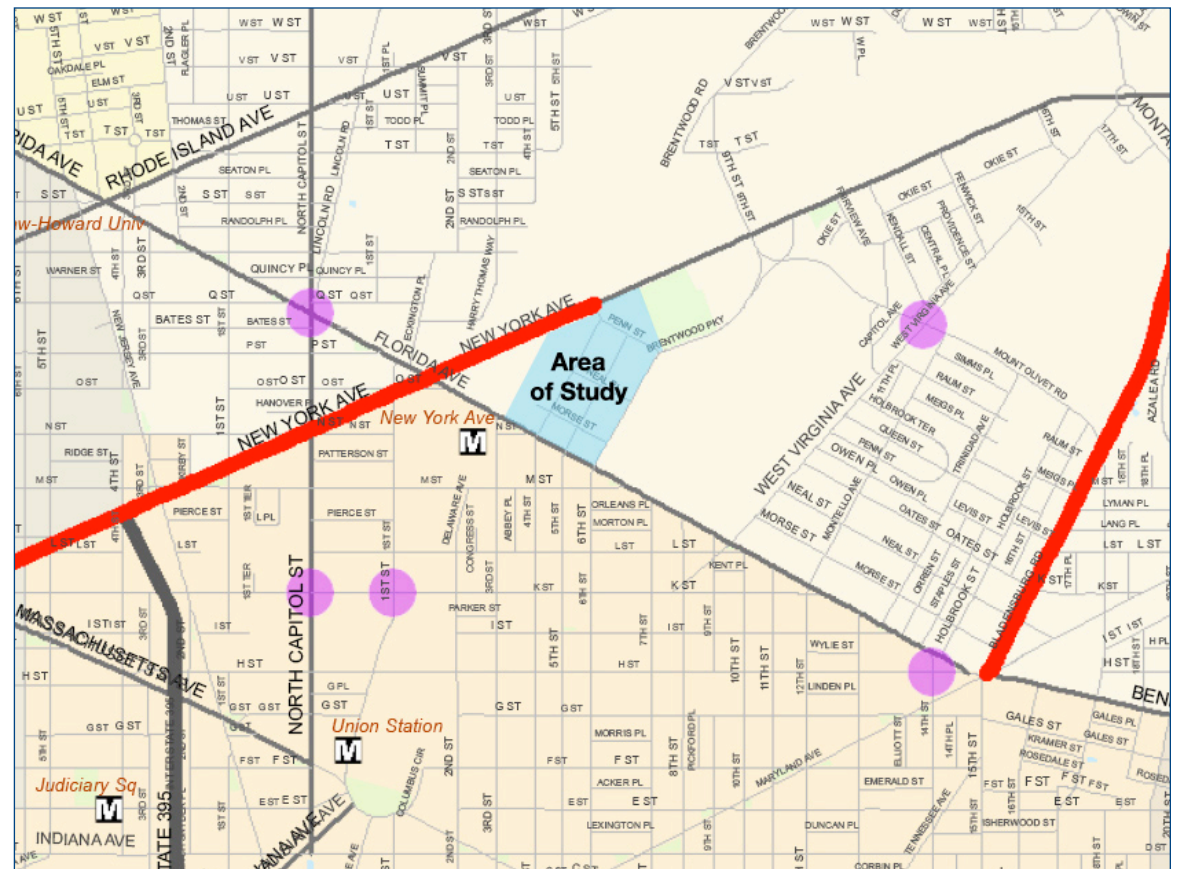


fig. 4.25

**Traffic and Parking:** As previously noted, there is an overlapping mix of vehicles and people throughout the Study Area. There is also a significant overlap of parking, loading, and traffic flow. Because of the uses within the Study Area, large semi-trailer trucks and medium sized box trucks are forced to share the road with smaller vehicles. Many of the existing buildings are loaded and serviced through the front, which creates conflicts with parking and pedestrians. Also, large volumes of delivery traffic at concentrated times of the day (early in the morning) and relatively none at other times, complicates the traffic flow and congestion even more. Two examples of these issues can be seen in figures 37.1 and 37.2 on the adjacent page. The timing of concentrated traffic and types of traffic also creates noise issues throughout the area.

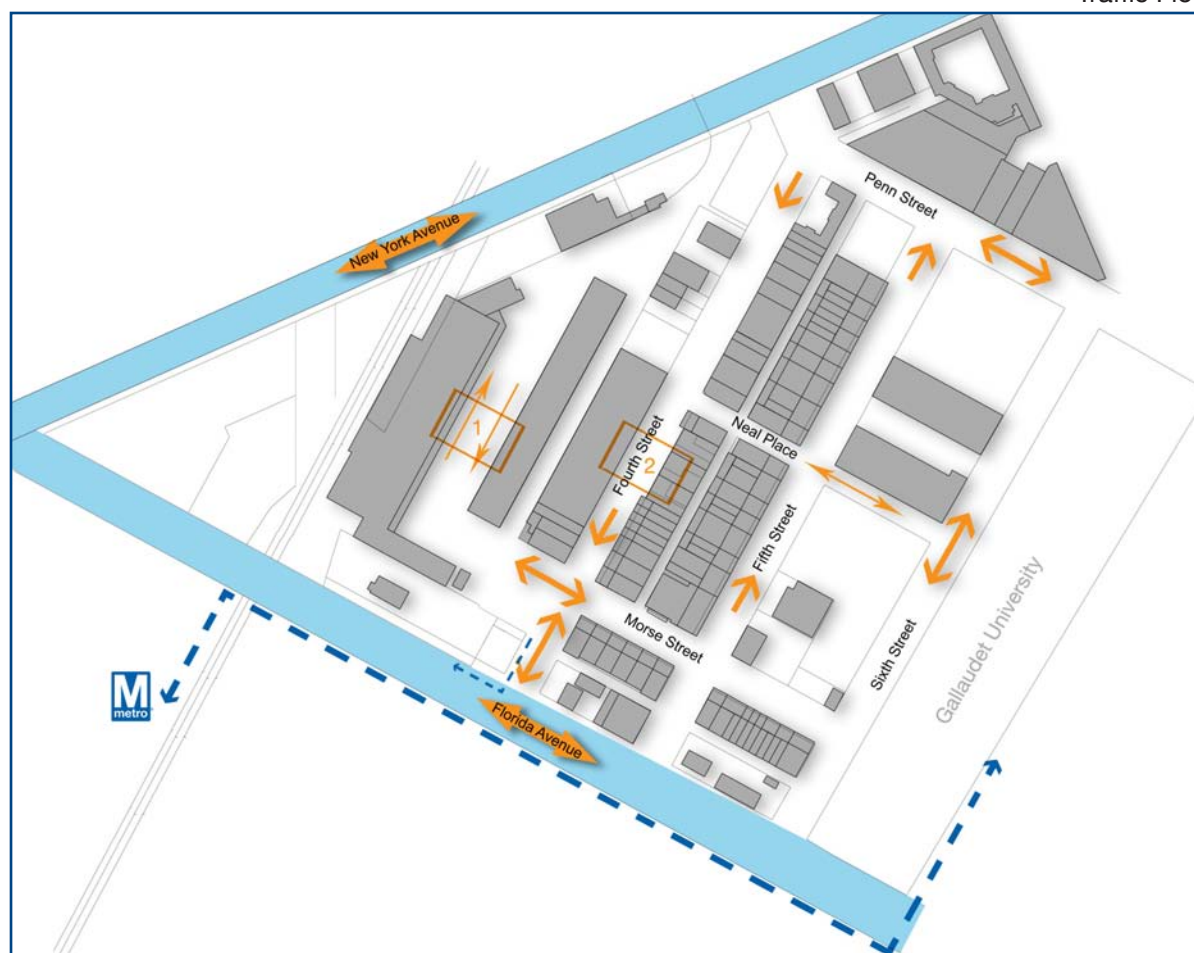
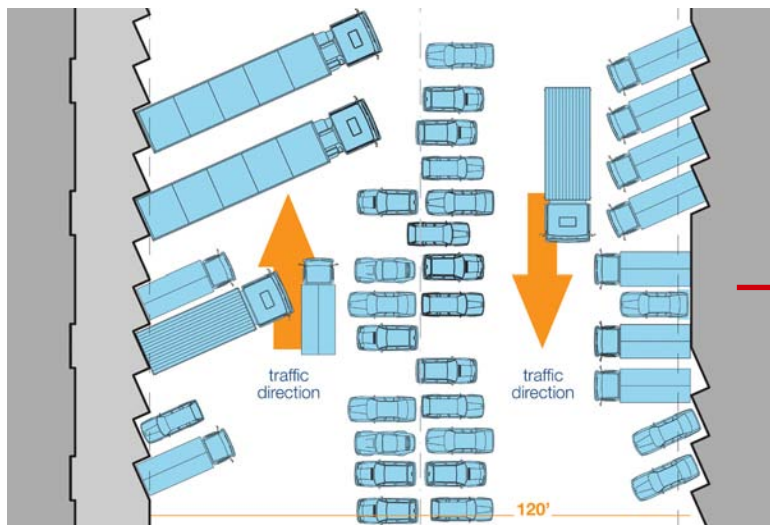
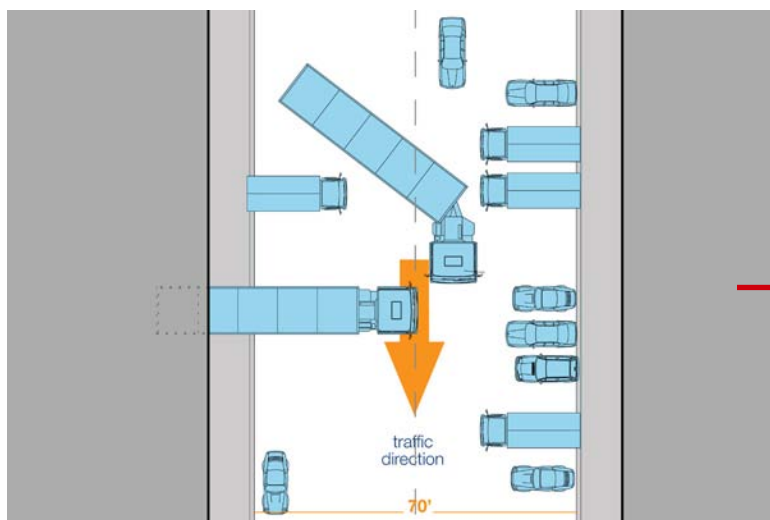


fig. 4.26





1  
fig. 4.27



2  
fig. 4.28



**Site Access and Circulation:** The Study Area is accessible by public transportation via several main bus lines and the New York Avenue/Florida Avenue Metro stop, which was opened in November 2004. No Metrobus lines go directly through the area, but the 90, 92, 93, and X3 buses all make stops along Florida Avenue, adjacent to the Study Area. It is located between two of the major traffic arteries in and out of the city. According to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) *New York Avenue Corridor Study* in 2006, approximately 60,300 vehicles pass by the area on New York Avenue each day. In 2025, this number is projected to be approximately 81,000 vehicles a day. According to the same study, approximately 31,000 vehicles pass by the area on Florida Avenue each day. In 2025, this number is projected to average 55,000 vehicles a day. The Study Area is also near several of the existing major bike paths or proposed bike paths as part of the 2005 District Department of Transportation (DDOT) *District of Columbia Bicycle Master Plan*. Figure 39.2, shows the Study Area in relation to the proposed and existing multi-use trails on New York Avenue and the Metropolitan Branch Trail (the brown dashed lines), as well as the proposed bicycle lanes down Sixth Street (the light blue dashed line).

fig. 4.31



View of Study Area from Metro platform

fig. 4.30



Main entrance at New York Ave. & Penn St.

fig. 4.29



View of entrance off Florida Avenue

## DDOT Proposed Bicycle Facilities Map



fig. 4.32



## Enlarged Proposed Bicycle Facilities Map



fig. 4.33



## Economic & Real Estate Analysis of The Market

Economics Research Associate's (ERA) was retained by CORE architecture + design and the Washington DC Office of Planning to perform an analysis of the Study Area and assessment of its redevelopment potential.

The Florida Avenue Market serves primarily wholesale customers who do not buy at the volumes necessary to receive drop-off delivery or meet the minimum order requirements from other large wholesale suppliers. The Florida Avenue Market finds its niche in this market group, as the large-scale wholesale food distribution market is dominated by the state-subsidized Maryland Wholesale Food Cord in Jessup, Maryland. The Florida Avenue Market also contains a number of other businesses; however, ERA estimates that the majority of sales result from the wholesale trade and food and beverage stores.

This study is broken into four basic elements: an analysis of the economic impacts of the Market, a comparison with competing or complimentary area markets using cases studies, an inventory of rents in the Market, and wholesale market feasibility expressed in the potential impact on rents if the project area includes redevelopment with market rate housing, office, and retail spaces. In preparation for the analyses, ERA worked with the DC Office of Planning to gather data and complete an analysis of the Market's current condition. This analysis involved creating an inventory of existing business as well as doing a qualitative assessment of the site. Data gathering was hindered by a lack of available tax data and by the unwillingness of the majority of business owners to share complete information.

Retail stall inside DC Farmers Market



fig. 4.35

ERA was able to gather data from a limited number of businesses and through in-house data banks; however, many data inputs have been extrapolated through a combination of both sources and should serve as conservative estimates, as they were not derived through primary sources.

The case studies of comparable facilities revealed that there are no facilities acting like the Florida Avenue Market – a combination of public retail and privately-owned wholesale and retail space within the same market. However, there are other facilities that provide information about how other cities' markets are organized. Some are publicly owned, such as the state-owned Maryland Food Center Authority wholesale-only facilities in Jessup, Maryland, the City-owned Baltimore Public Markets retail facilities, and the City-owned Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia. The Chelsea Market in New York City is a privately-owned retail market facility.

The Florida Avenue Market is unique. While there may be social advantages to its current configuration and structure such as ethnic, small business development opportunities and an alternative outlet for fresh produce and meats for District residents, the economic advantages of the current Florida Avenue Market

are limited. In any future redevelopment scenario, the future arrangement of Florida Avenue Market as a retail and wholesale market may need to be reconsidered.

The complete ERA report, "Florida Avenue Market Phase 2 IMPLAN Market Impacts Report," with all supporting data, charts, and analysis, can be found in Appendix B at the end of this document.





## V. Issues and Opportunities

### The Key Issues to Address

Through this strategic redevelopment process for the Study Area, several key issues have been identified. These issues prohibit the area from being developed to its full potential of highest and best use; they create public safety concerns throughout the area; they create traffic, loading, and parking congestion; and they affect the overall desirability of a very unique and historic area becoming a public destination point.

Original Union Market Terminal signage and building



fig. 5.01

Key issues include:

- **Site Conditions:** The nature of many of the wholesale and industrial businesses in the area creates challenges for trash, debris, and safety. Many of the buildings in the area need significant repairs and/or replacement.
- **Traffic and Safety:** Truck traffic and loading create congested traffic flow throughout the area and create an unsafe pedestrian environment.
- **Circulation:** There are no distinct public spaces. Oversized street widths (to accommodate morning truck traffic) and deteriorated sidewalk systems deter pedestrian circulation from nearby residential neighborhoods and Gallaudet University through the area to the Metro station.
- **Environmental Impacts:** Vast expanses of paved surfaces and empty lots negatively impact the natural environment and emphasize the current lack of green space.
- **Economic Growth:** There are many empty lots and undeveloped areas that sit unused and thus do not contribute to the economic growth of the area or the city as a whole.
- **Neighboring Communities:** The Study Area and many of its uses do not compliment the nearby residential neighborhoods, Gallaudet University, or the future neighboring NoMA development.
- **Image:** Currently, the site does not strengthen the public image of the city for the high volume of traffic arriving from the north via New York Avenue or for residents in adjacent neighborhoods.

The Key Issues to Address continued...

- **Stakeholders:** A complex ownership map and the vested interests of many, including the city government, Gallaudet University, neighboring developments, and the surrounding community, make a cohesive master plan more difficult to achieve.
- **Economic Pressures:** The economic and real estate advantages of the wholesale/retail market as it currently exists are very limited, which increases the pressure to rehabilitate or redevelop.
- **Zoning:** The existing CM-1 zoning reflects the current warehouse uses on the site, but would not permit the broader range of uses that may be desirable on this site, and would not provide densities or heights that will encourage quality redevelopment appropriate to this location on major circulation routes and close to a metro station.

## The Opportunities Provided

This strategic redevelopment initiative attempts to create a solution-based redevelopment plan that seamlessly integrates the surrounding urban fabric, while tackling current negative perceptions of the study area. It provides a unique opportunity for this area to evolve from an island of under-developed, light-industrial sites to a development that is vibrant and unified with its adjacent communities. Additionally, it works to facilitate development that will compliment the future developments outlined in the *NoMA*, *Northeast Gateway Revitalization Strategy*, and *New York Avenue Corridor* studies.

This strategic redevelopment also provides an opportunity to balance the objectives of the many stakeholders in the current wand in its future development. These parties include the city and Office of Planning, current Study Area landowners, tenants and users, the surrounding community, neighboring Gallaudet University, and any future developers interested in the site. It also allows for preservation of the unique and historical set of buildings that represent the area's original uses - the Union Market Terminal.

View down 6th Street towards the Capitol



fig. 5.02



## VI. Development Framework

### Introduction

A first-time visitor to the Florida Avenue Market today may feel a sense of bewilderment. The experience can be rather chaotic; trucks parked helter-skelter, cars weaving around them way too fast, the mingled odors of raw chicken, international spices, and sometimes garbage. Where is the farmers market? Which of these businesses sell retail? Am I allowed to go into any of these stores?

On the other hand, for people who know the Market well, and for those who thrive on exploring the lesser-known parts of Washington, the Florida Avenue Market is an exciting, vital place, full of unique resources and shopping opportunities. The grittiness is part of the allure, and makes the Market feel like a real, genuine place. Such people don't deny the chaos, but see it more as a loosely orchestrated daily ballet of early morning truck maneuvering, and people shopping for the goods that keep their restaurants, grocery stores, and home kitchens running. It may be messy, but it gets the job done.

What both groups of people can agree on is that something has to change at the Florida Avenue Market. For the former, the grittiness, unclear pedestrian ways, lack of signage and sense of being unsafe are all barriers to attracting large numbers of retail customers, and perhaps some wholesalers. For the latter,

inefficient parking and loading practices slow down wholesale transactions, and outdated facilities drive many wholesalers to far-out suburban alternatives.

The Florida Avenue Market area can and should work for both groups of people. There are many examples of successful, clean, thriving, mixed-use wholesale/retail markets throughout the world that efficiently fulfill their industrial purpose of supplying fresh foods to restaurants and grocers, while also serving as a hub for retail food vending and even tourism. In fact, with a more efficient layout and facilities, the Florida Avenue Market site can be leaner and more productive, leaving space for new complimentary mixed-use development.

This section outlines a vision for the Florida Avenue Market that retains its industrial purpose and character, while introducing changes that are necessary for the Market to adapt and survive into the future. What will this look like? Who will the Market serve? What new uses will be introduced to compliment the existing uses? The vision takes into consideration years of discussions and meetings with business owners, property owners, retail and wholesale customers, residential and institutional neighbors and local political leaders. It is not perfect, but is a very necessary starting point for controlled change. Left alone, the Market will continue to struggle. The hope for this vision is that it will give everyone who cares about the area the tools needed to ensure that this very special corner of Washington is maintained and developed conscientiously and sustainably.

## The Vision

### **Function** – *What does it do?*

The Florida Avenue Market area will be a mixed-use neighborhood that serves a variety of purposes. Wholesale market businesses continue to thrive in a leaner, more efficient, modern facility. Retail businesses expand in scale and variety, but with an emphasis on food and food-related merchandise and services. Other regional and neighborhood-scale retailers and restaurants are established to serve the day-to-day needs of existing and new residents on site and in the surrounding areas. People come to work in new office space, live in new residential buildings, and take advantage of community services and new recreational options.

### **Character** – *What does it look like?*

The historic origins of the market area are present, with preserved, renovated, or adaptively reused original market buildings at the heart of the site. New buildings on the east end of the site will enhance the adjacent market buildings and the Gallaudet University campus. The buildings here will reach out to one another as a visible signal of connection between the areas. New buildings to the south east will respect the bordering townhouse community of northern Capitol Hill and the nearby residential neighborhoods. The character to the west and north will complement the character of the new, modern-style anticipated along New York Avenue, and in the NoMa neighborhood just over the railroad tracks.

### **Sense of Place** – *What does it feel like?*

The Florida Avenue Market of the future will continue to be an exciting, bustling place, full of surprises. People looking for a quiet residential neighborhood, or a sterile office environment should look elsewhere. Activities will begin early in the morning on most days, and continue into the evening. The rumble of truck traffic in the morning is joined by the scent of foods from around the world, and visitors know they're in a unique place, a working place. In the afternoon and evening, people feel free to explore the shops and restaurants. There is a sense of safety, security and order, but also a thrilling acknowledgement that this is a hub of commerce and activity.

### **Allure** – *Why do people go there?*

There has been a tremendous amount of new development in Washington over the past 10 years, and despite the economic downturn, Washington has one of the best outlooks for new development in the country. With all of this new development, why will people care about Florida Avenue Market over any other place? Wholesalers, for one, come to take advantage of the only such place left in Washington, right at the heart of the region's well-known restaurant industry and the city's international scene, fueled by embassies and consulates. Wholesale customers come



for the proximity to their restaurants and grocery stores, ensuring freshness and saving them precious time. Retail customers come for an experience like no other in the DC region where such a varied supply of local and international food products, merchandise, and services is available. Offices locate here to take advantage of the proximity to Metro, and the amenity to their employees being on top of the Market's resources. New residents are also attracted to the Metro-accessible location and the excitement of living near the market's unique activities, amenities, and services. The potentially historic market buildings are a significant allure for everyone, grounding and defining the area in a way that sets it apart from other new developments in the city.

**Connectivity/Transportation** – *How do people get and move around there?*

The Florida Avenue market is positioned to take advantage of a wide variety of transportation options. Much of the area is a five to 10 minute walk to the New York Avenue Metro Station, and the major adjacent streets are well served by bus lines. New residents, office workers, market workers, and casual visitors will likely take Metro on a regular basis. The Metropolitan Branch Trail that runs along the railroad tracks from Union Station should connect over to the market area, offering a significant bicycle connection to the

site. Bicyclists can also come from Sixth Street, a major bicycle route being planned by the District Department of Transportation. Vehicular access is available from Florida Avenue, Sixth Street and New York Avenue; and drivers will have access to both metered and off-street garage parking. Pedestrian conditions have greatly improved in the Market with visible, convenient, and safe access throughout the site.

**Public Realm** – *What do people do/experience there?*

The public realm will be much different from what it is today, but in many ways will be similar to the Market's early days in the 1930s. Sidewalks are clean and in good repair. Signage for pedestrians is of a consistent style and is located in prominent spots to direct visitors to shops, restaurants, services, parking, and nearby resources such as Metro and Gallaudet University. New open space, in the form of pocket parks or urban plazas, creates a respite from the bustle of the area, and tall tree canopies make for pleasant strolls along any street. Crosswalks are clearly marked, and planted median strips, along particularly busy streets, serve as havens for pedestrians. Pedestrian-oriented streets are lined with outdoor dining areas and retail displays in good weather, and there is room for people to linger, or to hurry and get their business done. The public realm must and will take on the diversity of uses and users of the area, making room for all.

The Vision continued...

**Sustainability** – *How environmental sustainable is the site?*

The District of Columbia is firmly committed to environmentally friendly and “green” practices in building design, infrastructure and other aspects of city life. Sustainability is not a goal or end in itself, but rather something that permeates and integrates with all of the categories discussed above. It should be noted here that all future development in the Study Area will be characterized by sustainable design, to the level required by the *DC Green Building Act of 2006* or beyond. Particular attention should be paid to high performance building design, energy efficiency, storm water management, air quality management, environmental noise reduction and the careful placement of sustainable, usable and attractive open space. These elements are not only important to the environment, but also help to strengthen the ideas of “green thoroughfares and canopies” as recommended by this plan, improving quality of life in a place now dominated by concrete and asphalt.

## Putting The Vision to Work

The remainder of this chapter uses The Vision to create specific recommendations that will be needed to realize it. The following sections explore the process for doing this, and recommended strategies for zoning, land use, historic preservation, transportation, place making and more. A vision is just a vision if it's only in your head or on the page. What comes next are the tools that can help bring it to life.

### Summary of The Vision:

- **Function:** New residential, office, and retail uses create a vibrant mixed use destination that retains a revitalized wholesale/retail market.
- **Character:** A mix of densities ranging from moderate to medium to high density, designed in such a way to be integrated into surrounding development and community fabric.
- **Sense of Place:** An environment that is functional, safe, dynamic and appealing to the senses.
- **Allure:** A site that capitalizes on its unique assets and appeals to residents, office workers, market workers, visitors, and students.
- **Public Realm:** A vibrant public realm that creates user friendly spaces and active ground floor uses with common design elements and human scaled development and design.
- **Connectivity:** Streetscapes that promote improved vehicular circulation and traffic calming while enhancing pedestrian circulation and access and decreasing pedestrian and truck conflicts.
- **Sustainability:** Development that embraces site and system sustainability features including applicable requirements of the *Green Buildings Act of 2006*, LEED certification, and best practices in stormwater management.

## Land Use and Development Recommendations

The recommendations in this section are intended to realize The Vision for the Market, specifically the function, character, sense of place and allure elements. The recommendations also promote the goals of the community for development, and enhance existing assets. In general, the recommendations are intentionally flexible to allow for creativity in site planning, diversity in heights and design, and appropriateness in relation to future market demand. Multiple owners may make a cohesive, comprehensive development complicated, therefore the flexibility in the recommendations is meant to ensure that individual development goals can be achieved within the context of the larger redevelopment vision for the entire market area.

### Land Use

As described in The Vision statement, the revitalized market area should feature a mix of land uses such as retail, office, and residential. The following general guidance applies to the entire Study Area:

- *Mix of Uses:* The plan supports a diversity of land uses throughout the study area and on individual development parcels. Coordination among property owners is essential to ensure that a balance of uses is achieved throughout the site to achieve the goals of this plan.
- *Wholesale Uses:* Wholesale uses may be relocated to the north western portion of the site closest to New York Ave. and Penn Street, which would allow for convenient truck access off of New York Avenue and a physical

separation of mixed use commercial and industrial uses. The feasibility of relocation of these uses is dependent upon the existing businesses and willingness of a property owner to construct a new facility. *The New Town Act of 2006* requires that wholesale uses be accommodated in the north-western portion of the site.

- *Food Retail and Related Uses:* There is a unique opportunity to cluster food retail and related uses in the FAMS to highlight its unique character and history. There are many ways to achieve this including restoring the historic market complex as a retail market similar to Pikes Place in Seattle, or Granville Island in Vancouver. Other enterprises such as catering companies, cooking supply stores, culinary schools, and retail stores can also realize this opportunity.
- *Street Activating Uses:* To fulfill the public realm and sense of place vision for the Study Area, it is essential that street activating or pedestrian enlivening activities are featured in the ground floors of development or within the public space of key streets such as Sixth Street, Fifth Street, Morse Street, Florida Avenue, and Neal Place. These uses can take the form of retail spaces with vibrant facades and highly transparent storefronts or public realm activities such as plazas, vending stations, or outdoor cafes.

### Historic Preservation & Adaptive Reuse

The potentially historic market complex consists of a collection of structurally viable buildings that provide physical evidence of the city's past. As historic buildings with a story to tell, the market buildings should be retained and adapted to new uses as necessary. Through good and sensitive design, new construction can be successfully achieved alongside these historic buildings, and/or incorporated into them. Rehabilitation of the potentially historic buildings may take advantage of federal preservation tax incentives that allow 20% of rehabilitation costs to be taken as a tax credit.

### Zoning & Intensity of Development

As a result of this small area plan, the zoning for the study area could be changed through the zoning map amendment process, which requires public review and approval by the District's Zoning Commission. The zoning recommendations in the plan are designed to accomplish three objectives:

1. Provide opportunities for additional density and associated building height, especially in areas designated as "High Density" or "Medium-High Density"
2. Facilitate the preservation, renovation and adaptive reuse of the potentially historic structures in the Study Area

3. Provide for a broader range of uses in keeping with The Vision for the area.

The following general guidance applies to the entire Study Area and the sub-areas defined in figure 57.1:

- Development in all sub-areas should contain a variety of building heights.
- In the "Medium-High Density" sub-area, it is expected that heights will step down from the densest and tallest development along New York Avenue, NE and Penn Street, NE to the lower density developments needed at the corner of Sixth Street and Florida Avenue NE.
- Building heights in all sub-areas should also relate to the height of the potentially historic properties and to established uses outside of the Study Area.

Figure 57.1 illustrates the height and density recommendations for each sub-area within the FAMS. Maximum height and density illustrated in the second column would only be achievable through:

- A Planned Unit Development (PUD) that includes the provision of significant amenities as identified in this plan or in the *New Town Act*, or
- A TDR process, whereby owners of potentially historic properties may transfer unused density to other non-contributing properties in the Florida Avenue Market plan area, to a level consistent with the PUD density guidelines for the zoning district of the receiving property.



Land Use and Development Recommendations continued...

The **moderate to medium density** sub-area is located at the corner of Sixth Street and Florida Avenue. This lower level of density is necessary to encourage any new development to be appropriately scaled to its surrounding existing structures, particularly the 3-story residential row-house neighborhood directly across Florida Avenue. Any future development at this corner of the Study Area needs to be responsive to and compatible with the scale of these row houses.

The **medium to high density** sub-area is intended to encourage development that appropriately steps down from the high density development along New York Avenue and the rail line to the lower density developments at the corner of Sixth and Florida Avenue, to the lower density development across

Sixth Street, on the campus of Gallaudet University, and the lower scale of development at the historic heart of the Study Area.

The **high density** sub-area encourages the development of larger scale projects adjacent to the rail line and along New York Avenue, which is considered one of the “gateways” to the city. The width and traffic volumes of New York Avenue support this level of building height and density. It is also consistent with the density approved for the Washington Gateway Project PUD. High density development at these locations is in accordance with the goals of the *Northeast Gateway Revitalization Strategy* and the *New York Avenue Corridor* studies.

	MATTER OF RIGHT (MOR)		PUD / TDR	
Area	Height	FAR	Height *	FAR
Moderate - Medium	65'-00"	4.0	65'-00" - 90'-00"	4.0 - 6.0
Medium - High	70'-00"	5.0	70'-00" - 130'-0"	5.0 - 8.0
High	90'-00"	6.5	130'-00"	8.0

\* or less if restricted by the Height Act